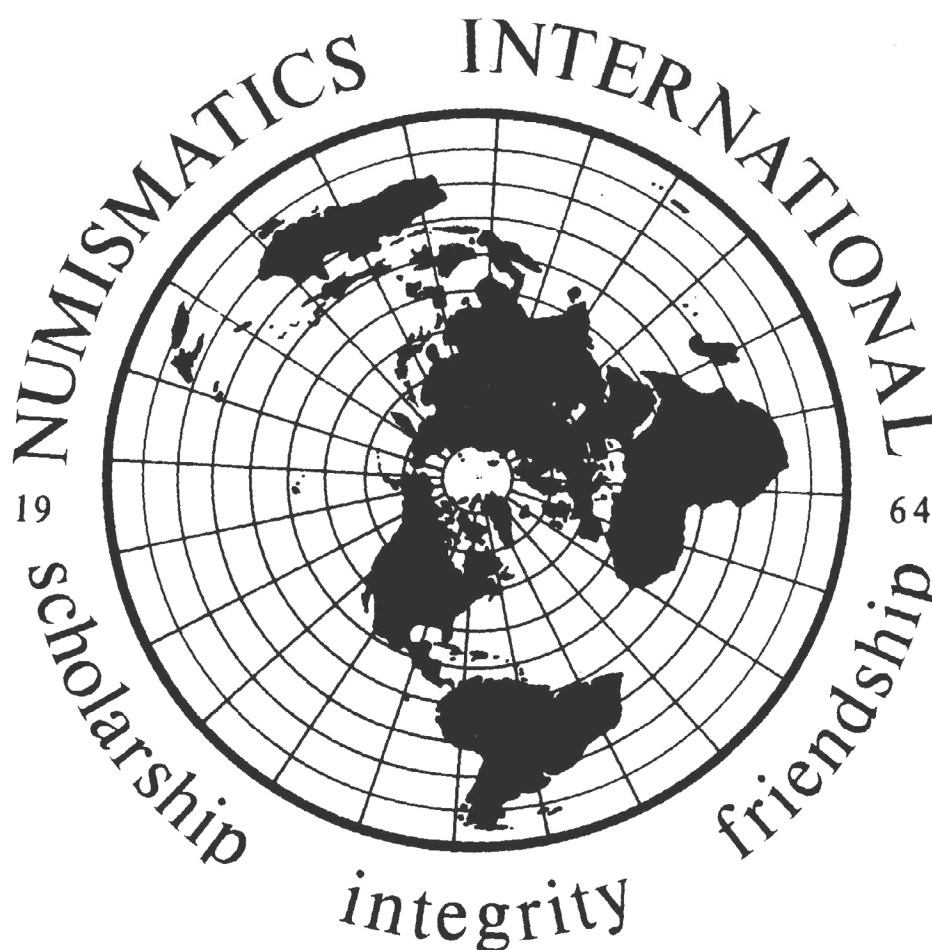


# NI Bulletin

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November / December 2013

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# Numismatics International Bulletin

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Along with this final bulletin for 2013 come my best wishes for Christmas and the upcoming New Year. This edition carries the penultimate installment of Greg Brunk's political countermark series which as you will see is for the United States. In case you are wondering we do not carry articles on US numismatics as we believe this topic is well served elsewhere, but then, when we have a series such as world countermarks we can't omit the US either. I trust that you agree with me that Greg's entire series is worth reading. Next year the series will be completed. In addition to Brunk we offer an article on Ecuador from David Fiero who last appeared in these pages in 2004. I hope you enjoy his article and comfortable writing style.

The autumn auction season is well underway with many exciting coins. If you are actively collecting I wish you good luck with your acquisitions. On the other hand I see that not all is well in numismatics because due to finances the Geld Museum in Utrecht is to close October 31, 2013 (<http://www.geldmuseum.nl/museum>).

Our article backlog is low so now is a good time to consider submitting something of your own or to refer your friends and associates to us.

Your Board of Governors wishes you the best for the holiday season and the New Year.

*Herman Blanton*

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## **Coins Countermarked with Political Messages and Related Pieces**

**Gregory G. Brunk, NI #749**

**(Continued from July /August 2013 *NI Bulletin*)**

**Catalog: Part U (United States)**

© 2013, Gregory G. Brunk

— UNITED STATES (cont.) —

### **ADVERTISING THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD IN CALIFORNIA**

Countermarks applied by governments almost always had a monetary purpose by either certifying a coin was of good weight and quality or changing its official value. The United States government only countermarked coins on a single occasion and that was for a non-monetary purpose. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of February 2, 1848, ceded California and the Southwest to the US at the end of the Mexican-American War. Only because of this happenstance did the US, rather than Mexico, benefit from the discovery of gold in California. While small gold strikes had been made for many years, James Marshall made a great find on Jan. 24, 1848, while working as a partner of John Sutter in building a sawmill on the American River branch of the Sacramento River near Coloma.

Colonel Richard Mason, the Commander of the Tenth US Military Department at Monterey eventually realized the importance of the discovery at Sutter's Mill. He toured the gold fields in August on the encouragement of a young Lieutenant William Tecumseh Sherman. Soon afterwards, Mason had one of his other junior officers purchase 230 ounces of California gold at the price of \$10 per ounce. He instructed Lt. Lucien Loeser to take the gold to the Adjutant General in Washington, along with a report describing the discovery, which had been written mostly by Sherman. Years later, Sherman became the Union general who burned Atlanta and was instrumental in the Indian Wars. The report also mentioned when they visited San Francisco on June 20th that "all, or nearly all, of its male inhabitants had gone to the mines. The town, which a few months before was so busy and thriving was then almost deserted" (quoted in Gibbs 1998).

Loeser began his trip to Washington in late August, but his route was circuitous and it took three months to reach the Capital. A duplicate copy of Mason's letter reached Washington two days before James Polk's annual presidential message to Congress, and Polk mentioned the discovery in his speech. The President noted that "mineral deposits of precious metal existed to a considerable extent in California at the time of its acquisition. Recent discoveries render it probable that these mines are more extensive and valuable than anticipated. The accounts of the abundance of gold in that territory are of such an extraordinary character as would scarcely command belief..." (quoted in Bowers 1975: 12).

Loeser and the gold reached Washington a few days later. Upon the gold's arrival, the *Washington Union* commented upon the rumors then flying about the discovery of gold in California (Bowers and Merena Galleries, Auction of the Henry Clifford Collection, March 18-20, 1982, lot 176).

We readily admit that the account so nearly approached the miraculous that we were relieved by the evidence of our own senses on the subject. The specimens have all the appearance of the native gold we had seen from the mines of North

Carolina and Virginia; and we are informed that the Secretary will send the small chest of gold to the Mint, to be melted into coin and bars, and most of it to be subsequently fashioned into medals commemorative of the heroism and valor of our officers. Several of the other specimens he will retain for the present in the War Office as found in California in the form of lumps, scales, and sand; the last named being of different hues, from bright yellow to black, without much appearance of gold. However skeptical any man may have been, we defy him to doubt that if the quantity of such specimens as these be as great as has been represented, the value of gold in California must be greater than has been hitherto discovered in the old or new continent; and great as may be the immigration to this new El Dorado, the frugal and industrious will be amply repaid for their enterprise and toil.

*President Polk portrayed the discovery of California gold as a validation of his policy in pursuing the unpopular war with Mexico.* As Mason had noted in his report, “I have no hesitation now in saying, that there is more gold in the country drained by the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers than will pay the cost of the present war with Mexico for a hundred times over” (quoted in Gibbs 1999). The gold was put on display in the War Office, and on December 8th the Secretary of War, William Marcy wrote the Director of the Mint requesting that most of it be turned into coins. (See Hurlburt 1968: 1146-1147 for a reproduction of the actual letter.)

If the metal is found to be Pure Gold, as I doubt not that it will be, I request you reserve enough of it for two medals ordered by Congress and not yet completed, and the remainder, with the exception of one or two small bars, I wish to have coined and sent with the bars to this Department, as many may wish to procure specimens of coin made from California gold, by exchanging other coins for it, I would suggest that it be made into Quarter Eagles with a distinguishing mark on each.

The quarter eagle was the smallest denomination US gold coin in 1848, which is why it was chosen for countermarking as a way to maximize publicity. Each quarter eagle made from the shipment of California gold was hand stamped “CAL.” while resting on the obverse die in the Mint. Soon 80,000 Forty-Niners flooded into the newly acquired territory. California quickly became a state in 1850, which cemented US control over the Southwest. It is estimated that 1,389 quarter eagles stamped CAL. were minted, which was roughly fifteen percent of the output of such gold coins from the Philadelphia Mint that year.

Modern counterfeits exist, including a fake stamp on genuine 1848 quarter eagles. Bowers (1975) reported such a piece, which is distorted on the opposite side of the coin from the countermark. That deformation indicates the coin was stamped after the piece left the Mint. The recesses of the letters are bright and shiny, whereas the rest of the coin was very well worn.

## CAL.

1848 Quarter Eagle: Roughly 1,389 were issued.



**Quarter Eagles**

### References

- Bowers and Merena Galleries. 1982. *Auction of the Henry Clifford Collection*. March 18-20, 1982.
- Bowers, Q. David. 1975. "Fake Cal. Quarter Eagle Shows Countermark Flaws," *Coin World* (June 4): 9.
- Gibbs, William T. 1998. "Sherman's Gold: 1848 Cal. Quarter Eagle May Never Have Been Struck Had William T. Sherman Not Been Stationed in California," *Coin World* 1998 (April 20): 16-24, 42.
- Hurlbutt, Clarence J. 1968. "The 1848 Cal. Quarter Eagle," *Numismatist* 1968: 1145-1149.

## THE SLAVERY DEBATE AND THE CIVIL WAR

Besides the pieces listed below, there are fantasies with the legend TIMBUCTO / ESSEX CO. / N. - Y. or something similar. They were billed "when discovered" during the 1980s as issues of John Brown's Adirondack anti-slavery commune in Essex County, New York. It was claimed as a way to support their authenticity that the identification had come from David Bowers, who reports he never saw one and certainly didn't authenticate them! Russell Rulau examined two specimens in 1999 and reported *they are made from the same individual letter stamps that were used to make various Western fantasy countermarks!* At least three pieces are known on Canadian tokens.

### See Deuteronomy

This *Biblical* verse reads, "No one who has been emasculated by crushing or cutting may enter the assembly of the Lord. No one born of a forbidden marriage nor any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the Lord, even down to the tenth generation."

This enigmatic countermark may refer to the series of bills that were part of the Compromise of 1850. According to the Missouri Compromise of 1820, new states were to be admitted as pairs of Slave and Free states so the South could maintain its veto in Congress. Accordingly, California should have been *cut in half*, the northern part admitted as a free state and the southern half admitted as a slave state. Henry Clay forged the Compromise of 1850 whereby California was admitted as a free state, and an associated series of laws were enacted to protect Southern interests. These

included the Fugitive Slave Act, which restricted the rights of Northern Blacks and required Northern Whites to arrest fugitive slaves and return them to the South.

A following verse in Deuteronomy [23:15] states: “Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from the master...” So this seems to be an Abolitionist countermark that reflects their view the United States would be damned by God until it destroyed the forbidden marriage of the North and the South by eliminating the abomination of slavery. That was the goal of the abolitionist John Brown, who was hung for leading the raid on the Federal Arsenal at Harpers Ferry in an effort to spark a revolt of Southern Blacks. This 1859 George Lovett medal of John Brown’s execution reads “Resistance to Tyranny is Obedience to God”



About the size of a Large Cent

**SEE DEUTERO- / NOMY 23: 1, 2!**

Half Cent: 1834

Large Cent: 1831 (2), 1833, 1837, 1843, 1851

Half Dollar: 1832, 1834

One Real: UK

Two Reales: 1778, 1794



Two Reales



Half Cent

### **The Beating of Charles Sumner**

“Hit Him Again” refers to the actions of Representative Preston Brooks of South Carolina, who beat Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts with a walking stick on the floor of the US Senate in 1856. Brooks did so in response to Sumner’s denouncement of Brook’s uncle, Senator Andrew P. Butler of South Carolina. Sumner said that Butler “had chosen a mistress, the harlot slavery.” The slogan “Hit Him Again” became a rallying cry in defense of the great evil of “Southern honor,” and it was engraved on many walking canes (Rulau 2004: 867).

## **HIT HIM AGAIN**

Small Cent: 1858



**Small Cent**

### **Abraham Lincoln**

Fakes of Civil War era pieces are common. Quite a few *cast* half dollars have appeared in recent years with engraved names and units of Confederate officers to make it appear they were used as Confederate dog tags. Some Lincoln countermarks also are fantasies that were made for collectors long ago, but it often is not possible to tell the legitimate ones from the fantasies. Sometimes the only absolute way to expose a fake is to find that the same set of punches was used to make other fantasies.

Hannibal Hamlin was a Senator from Maine who was known for his opposition to the expansion of slavery. He was Lincoln's running mate in the 1860 election. Hamlin later urged Lincoln to enact the Emancipation Proclamation and to arm Blacks, but was replaced as Vice President in 1864 with Andrew Johnson, the Southern Democrat who rejected secession and became President when Lincoln was assassinated.

**ABE / 64**

Civil War Token

**LINCOLN / & / HAMLIN**

Large Cent: 1850

The first of the Lincoln assassination countermarks is clearly a fake. It appears on an 1864 two cents that was well worn from decades of circulation before stamping. If that evidence was not enough to brand it a fantasy, the piece was made from the same set of letter punches as the very next lot in the June 3, 1982, Joseph Lepczyk auction. Lot 575 was an 1846 large cent stamped OLIVER P. LIPPINCOTT'S and POCKET / PIECE on the reverse. Half a dozen Oliver Lippincotts were listed in the 1930 Census—which recently appeared on the Internet—but none of them was listed with a middle name beginning with the letter P. So his identity is not certain.

**DAM. / J. W. BOOTH**

Two Cents: 1864



**Two Cents**

The writer has not seen examples of the next two countermarks to determine if they are genuine, but a warning is in order. By now readers should realize such things are easy to fake using individual letter punches. *Caveat emptor!*

**A. LINCOLN / APRIL / 15 / 1865**

Two Cents: 1864

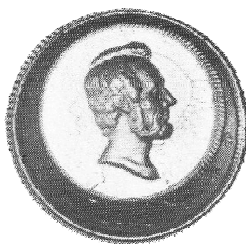
**A. LINCOLN / DIED / APR. 14 / 1865**

Half Dollar: 185X

Not as many coins are countermarked with Lincoln medal dies as with Washington medal dies, but a few do exist, and other Lincoln dies besides those listed here have been noted on oversize, blank planchets. A number of such presidential pieces have the same style of stamping. They were struck with a very high pressure press, which made almost proof-like impressions. The source of the dies is not known, but someone probably obtained a number of old dies from a medal firm that went out of business decades ago. While it is not clear when the coins were countermarked, it is known that Robert Brashlow had some 19th century Washington dies in his possession during the 1950s, and he made re-strikes from them. So he may be the source of the Lincoln pieces too.

**Lincoln Bust Right**

Gold Half Eagle: 1861



**\$5.00 Gold Piece**

**Lincoln Bust Right, Wearing Suit**

New Jersey Copper: UK

**New Jersey Copper**

**(Size of a Large Cent)**



## Benjamin Franklin Civil War Token Re-strikes

These countermarked coins have been known since at the early 1940s. They were made for the collector's market using a Civil War token die (Fuld-153) that someone found. All specimens have pristine, uncirculated countermarks, and apparently were struck using a hydraulic press. They also are known as *klippe* (square planchet) medals in white metal.

### BENJAMIN FRANKLIN around Franklin's Bust

Large Cents: 1841, 1842, 1847, 1848, 1850, UK (3)

Half Dollars: 1834, 1876



Large Cent

## References

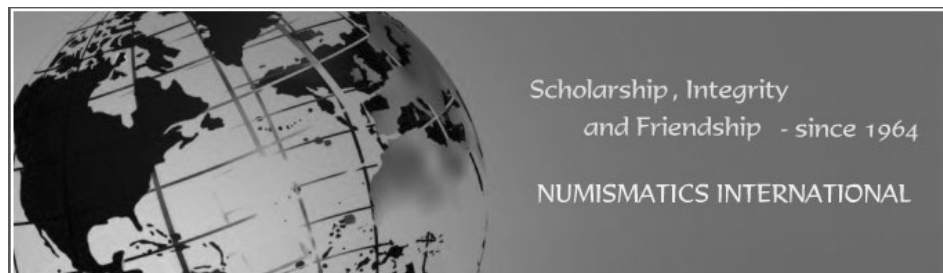
Brunk, Gregory G. 2007. "The Enigmatic 'See Deuteronomy' Countermark," *TAMS Journal* 47: 75-76.

Rulau, Russell. 2004. *Standard Catalog of United States Tokens*. Iola.

## MISCELLANEOUS NINETEENTH CENTURY ISSUES

### In God We Trust

There was a popular movement in the 1860s to have the motto "In God We Trust" put on US coins. Beginning in 1866 the motto appeared on a banner above the eagle on liberty seated quarters, half dollars and dollars, and also was placed on gold eagles and double eagles. This unusual countermark has "GOD" stamped in ornate letters. It probably is associated with the campaign. The countermark appears on this 1860 silver dollar in the same place that it appears on later dollars.



## IN GOD WE TRUST

Silver Dollar: 1860-O



**Silver Dollar**

### **Souvenirs of Presidential Funerals**

The writer remembers putting pennies on railroad tracks as a kid so they would be flattened by an oncoming train. Most of these pieces seem to be of this sort and are souvenirs that were stamped after having been flattened.

#### **PRES. GARFIELD'S FUNERAL TRAIN PASSED OVER THIS SEPT 23, 1881**

Flattened Indian Head Cent: UK

#### **W G HARDING FUNERAL TRAIN 8/9/23**

Flattened Nickel: UK

#### **MCKINLEY FUNERAL TRAIN 9.18.01**

Small Cent: 1896.

### **Winfield Hancock**

General Winfield Scott Hancock was the Democratic presidential nominee in 1880 who lost to James Garfield. The symbolism of this rebus medal for "hand-cock" is similar to other campaign medals. The piece was made by engraving a silver disk, which is perhaps a worn English shilling. "GENERAL" may be stamped from individual letter punches, but is more likely engraved.

#### **GENERAL / Hand Holding Rooster**

English Shilling?



**English Shilling?**

## **THE GOLD / SILVER STANDARD DEBATE**

A major political controversy of the late 19th century was whether US obligations should be backed by gold or silver. The amount of world gold was relatively fixed, while the amount of silver was constantly increasing because of the immense output of Western mines. The American gold standard meant there was the “free coinage” of gold. People could take gold to the mint and have it made into coins of the same weight.

A silver standard and the free coinage of silver would have meant that debtors could pay back loans with dollars that were worth less than what had been borrowed because of inflation. A gold standard was seen as beneficial to the wealthy, who had money to loan. A gold standard was detrimental to farmers and working men, who would have to pay back their loans in dollars worth just as much as when the money was borrowed.

### **IN GOLD WE TRUST**

Nickel: 1867

### **PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 1892**

Gold Dollar: 1849

### **Free Silver Movement**

William Jennings Bryan was the Democratic and Populist Parties' candidate for President in 1896. He was unsuccessful, but ran again in 1900 and 1908. In a speech at the Democratic National Convention he made the often quoted, but now little understood comment, “You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns. You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.” The phrase “16 to 1” refers to the weight ratio that the Democrats wanted the US government to employ at a time when the actual value of silver to gold was over 30 to 1. It was hoped such an inflationary monetary policy would bring the US out of the late 19th century recession.

### **FREE COINAGE 16 TO 1**

Silver Dollar: 1890-S



**Silver Dollar**

The legend of this Gorham Manufacturing Company “Bryan Money” medal notes that a US silver dollar only contains 412 grains of silver. The Gorham medals contained 823 grains of silver, the equivalent in value to a gold dollar. It is dated Sept. 16, 1896.



**About 1.5 times the diameter of a silver dollar**

Bryan’s political campaigns deeply divided the nation, and it was just a matter of chance in 1896 that the American political system did not take the path of creating a socialist and a conservative party as occurred in most European nations. The election was so divisive that almost everyone became involved. This was reflected in the record percentage of people who voted in 1896, being well over ninety percent of registered voters in many areas.

**BRYAN in Depressed Rectangle**

Quarter: 1893

Silver Dollar: 1896-Proof!

Eight Reales: 1896



**Eight Reales**

**BRYAN / 2 / 1896 (in Three Depressed Rectangles)**

This is the same BRYAN stamp as above  
Blank Planchet for Bryan Money Medal



**22mm**

**BRYAN**

Eight Reales: 1896

Bryan Money Medal of the Gorham Manufacturing Co: 1896

**NIT Trip**

The abbreviation NIT appears on Bryan Money and on turn of the century political buttons. It was slang for “No” as in “Nit Republican” and “Nit Democrat,” apparently indicating support for the Populist Party. It also was an abbreviation for “Not in Trust,” a reference to “In God We Trust” that appears on US paper money. During the late 19th and early 20th century there were many political clubs in the United States. They sometimes took excursions and had souvenir ribbons made for the occasions. This appears to be a souvenir of a group that supported the free coinage of silver.

**NIT TRIP**

Half Dollar: 1899



**Half Dollar**

## Silver Speculation of the 1930s

While all the Bryan political countermarks can be tied to the free silver debate, not all of them were issued during the 1896 presidential campaign. There was a short-lived silver speculation in 1933 when the Pedley-Ryan so-called dollars were minted, and the Bryan pieces not struck in the late 19th century seem to have been issued in the 1930s. It is not known what the initials GWC and the numeral 1 indicate. Two other BRYAN countermarks also are known on early large cents, but these probably are merchant, rather than political issues (Brunk 2003).

### **BRYAN / I / 1933**

Eight Reales: 1855, 1862, 1894



**Eight Reales**



**Eight Reales**

**BRYAN / 1 / 1933**

Blank Planchet



**Size of a Silver Dollar**

**BRYAN / GWC / MONEY**

Rev: **GWC / 16 TO 1 / 1900 / GWC**

Large Cent: 1803

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*NI*

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### **Membership Report**

The following persons have applied for membership. Unless objections in writing are received by January 1, 2014 the memberships are effective that day.

- 2760 Arthur Newmark, 2201 Pennsylvania, Ave. Philadelphia, PA 19130
- 2761 Brian R. Stickney, 804 Cincinnati Ave., El Paso, TX 79902
- 2762 Dean S. Thomas, 3245 Fairfield Road, Gettysburg, PA 17325

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*NI*

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### **Quiz**

**Bob Fritsch, NI #LM134**

Name the country beginning with R or S whose coins have the listed coinage themes. One of my favorite quizzes, and the answers are from the 34th SCWC (20th Century) and the 3rd SCWC (19th Century).

1. Three Castles, St. Marinus, Alessandro Volta.
2. Neslon Mandela, Gorilla, Grégoire Kayibanda.
3. Dr. Siaka Stevens, Sir Milton Margai, Dr. Joseph Saidu Momoh.
4. Carol I Domnulu, Alexandru Ioan Cuza, Mihai I.
5. Mud Crab, Coco-de-Mer Palm, Black Parrot.
6. Giraffe, Sable Antelope, Flame Lily.
7. Matterhorn, William Tell, Henry Dunant.
8. Merlion, Star Jasmine Plant, Pomfret Fish.
9. Alexander III, Nicholas II, Double-headed Eagle.
10. Two-headed Eagle, Peter I, Karageorgevich Coat-of-arms.

*NI*

## South Africa Golden “Tickey” Heritage Rare Coins



Republic gold Threepence 1898, KM-PnA23, Hern-ZP5, plain edge, SP64 PCGS, a fabulous example of this great South African rarity, among the most famous of the Kruger Republic coins, this coin exhibiting deeply mirrored surfaces fantastically well preserved, vibrant luster, a fully detailed strike, and high squared-off rims. Copies exist but they are easily discerned once you have seen the real thing, and here we are offer for sale what may well be the finest known piece.

This mysterious coin was stealthily made in 1898 by Sammy Marks, a ZAR entrepreneur who was something of a character, according to local legend. It seems he bought his way into the mint at Pretoria and selected a pair of dies for the silver threepence coinage, either altering the date or else using a die for the dated reverse side that was intended for but never employed to make commercial coinage. No silver 1898 threepence is known to exist. Sammy Marks created “at least 215 pieces” all in gold, avers Brian Hern in his standard reference on the ZAR coinage. The source of the gold used is not known. The dies used to make this coin remain in the South African Mint museum. Many of the pieces ended up in jewelry, and are impaired.

Abridged from Heritage World and Ancient Coins Signature Auction—Long Beach #3026 (2013 September 25-27, 30 & October 1) lot 25747. Article and images are through the courtesy of Heritage Auctions (HA.com).

*NI*

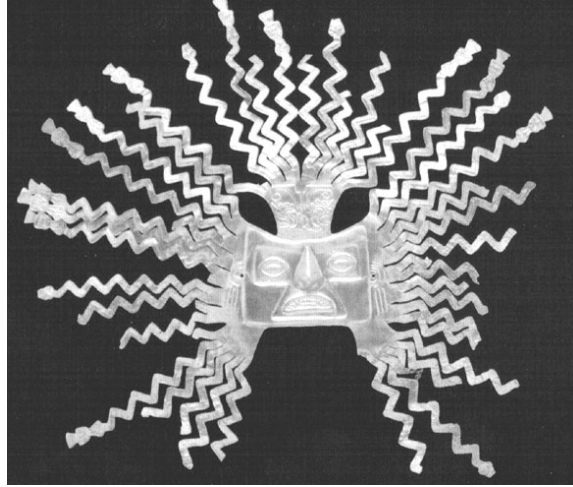


### Picture Quiz

From what country comes this coin with  
its distinctive lion?

Image is courtesy of Heritage Auctions  
(HA.com)

**Quito then and now: Beyond Barter at the Middle of the World**  
**Some thoughts on Ecuador seen through the prism of the first**  
**generation of the Quito mint**  
**David Fiero, NI #2115**



*The Banco Central (left) in Ecuador's capital Quito houses an important numismatic museum with friendly bilingual guides. Teardrops of the Sun (right): in pre-colonial times, gold had greater use value as an image—seen here on the bank façade and entrance ticket—than as a medium of exchange. Price of entry: “U.S. \$2”*

Four years ago my wife and I took our first trip to South America, spending two weeks in and around the capital city of Ecuador, Quito. Although it was the rainy season and we couldn't really see the Andean volcanoes in all their glory, a number of interesting experiences ensued. I had brought along some 'golden dollars' in their various iterations, knowing that American money was the coin of the realm. In the wonderful Guayasamín Museum shop, I attempted to buy a few posters with the Sacagaweas and Presidentials in my pockets, and the sales clerk would only take the 'Sacs'. As he put it: “These are *ours*, and those presidents are *yours*,” emphasizing the possessives with a certain tone of knowing pride in his voice. Who was I to argue? It is a matter of perception; clearly, the indigenous features of Sacagawea are readily recognized and ‘nationalized’ by the inhabitants of the Ecuadorean Andes. We were finally able to spend the Presidential dollars at an ice cream shop when the confused server called in her supervisor, who turned out to be a coin collector who had been looking for some!

I eventually did find a full-service coin shop, and an excellent one at that, as Julio Alvarez Montalvo carries an excellent selection of numismatic books as well, his downtown store serving as the *Librería Nacional* for works on Ecuadorean numismatics and related subjects. But for the first few days all I saw were jewelers' shops, several of which had a number of ‘coins’ displayed in the window. All were of the scarce early types from the 1830s and 1840s, and all were obviously crude counterfeits. I gazed at these, somewhat askance, and have only recently realized what they were; they might have actually circulated in the early days of the Republic following independence from Spain. In their own way, these were ‘legal’ illegal coins. There will be more to say on this a bit later. In the many vendors' stalls in the lovely Alameda park, a type of Central Park in Quito dividing the historical center from the newer sections of town, we found, among the booths selling indigenous

handicrafts, several which displayed coins and paper money. Since even the most common Ecuadorean material was rather expensive, I asked one vendor to show me his stock of world coins, and was delighted when a large bucketful of coins was spread out over the table. I was invited to sit down and have a look. The price was 25 cents per coin. I was surprised to find both silver Canadian quarters, and many smaller Colombian and Venezuelan silver pieces as well.

Still, the most unforgettable experience involving money occurred during lunch, at a working-class restaurant in downtown Quito. We had been warned of a ruse practiced by local pickpockets, in which a messy spill is created, for example by dousing the unsuspecting target with ketchup or ice cream, then offering to help with the cleanup, using the distraction to remove a wallet or purse. We had just sat down to eat when an elderly gentleman entered with two adolescent girls. They approached our table, and the man cried out "*Miren Uds! Dinero! Papel moneda!*" 'Look! Money! Paper money'! Being a collector, I fell for the trick hook, line and sinker, and was soon down on my hands and knees inspecting the banknotes, which turned out to be old devalued Mexican pesos and Ecuadorean sucres, worthless from a monetary standpoint. Meanwhile, one of the girls went for my wife's daypack, with her valuables inside, while the other made for my backpack. My wife, whose interest in numismatic bait was negligible, grabbed both backpacks in time, shouting in Spanish: "*Váyanse Uds! No nos roben!*" 'Get out of here; don't rob us!' And they left quickly, all three of them on the run. If they had managed to make off with our packs, we could never have caught them, at over 9,000 feet of elevation in a city we didn't know. But I had to admire their class act; distracting a numismatist by strewing banknotes about was something I hadn't suspected for a moment.

The most pleasant surprise we had on our all-too-brief visit to Quito was that people went out of their way to be pleasant in small ways, taking time out for us. For example, by helping us navigate the vagaries of the local bus system—we didn't wish to take taxis everywhere—to the point of staying with us until we found the right stop. One man explained that he had lived and worked in Los Angeles, and was aware of what it's like to be far from home in unknown surroundings which are not without risk, just as would be the case in a large American city. We had conversations with people of all ages and walks of life; people just take their time in Ecuador. We also had the feeling that we were most welcome in their country. I wonder if I would take so much time at home to help or simply chat with total strangers who spoke with an accent, and I'm afraid I often wouldn't.

What stands out in Quito is the simple pride of the people: in their Andean heritage, in their independence from extreme ideologies, in doing it all 'their way'. Not a lot of blaming the '-isms'; you won't hear too much about imperialism, post-colonialism or any of the rest. Although Ecuador has a left-wing president, he is no Hugo Chávez, though he may have used the flamboyant Venezuelan for politically opportune photo-ops, or even offer asylum to Julian Assange, of 'Wiki-Leaks'. On the level of the Andean street, we couldn't feel any Anti-Americanism, and they aren't even considering banning Coca Cola—Bolivia has been having this debate—as long as they can use our money and banish the specter of inflation. If they want to think it bears the image of an Incan princess, I say let them!



*Rural villagers exercise their hard-won ancestral rights by leading their llamas and alpacas to a downtown mass—outdoors!—during Christmas week. We attended as well and as part of the liturgy—partially in Quechua, the language of the Incas still widely spoken in the sierra—the visiting indigenous communities expressed the importance of their animals' presence during the Christmas festivities. The old ways matter because they were forbidden for centuries after the Spanish Conquest.*

Several books have been written, both appearing around the turn of the millenium, on the origins of the Quito mint and the history of money in Ecuador. Although time has passed and much has changed, being a bit behind the news cycle somehow matters less in a tradition-bound Spanish colonial city, at nearly two miles of elevation surrounded by volcanoes several miles higher up yet. The book I have just finished, which brought back my memories, is *La Moneda Ecuatoriana a través de los tiempos* ('Ecuadorean Coins through the Ages') by Melvin Hoyos. At this juncture I would like to summarize some of its more salient features, eventually focusing on the first generation of the Quito mint, the years from 1832 to 1863.

Money is the result of the division of labor, when a society passes the stage of the hunter-gatherer subsistence mode of acquiring the necessities of life and the need is felt for a commonly accepted standard of value. From here, it is but a short step to add the concept of time, upon which money becomes a means of storing value as well, and takes on the aspect of futurity. As author Melvin Hoyos introduces the first chapter of *Ecuadorian Coins through the Ages*, in the beginning, all was barter. Coastal indigenous groups traded the cacao bean, or the beautiful shell of the *spondylus* mollusk, with mountain-based tribes of the Andean interior. These, in turn, would trade metals, in particular copper, silver, and gold, which they had had learned to elaborate from earliest times. The Incas considered gold to be the teardrops of the sun. They would later add the leaf of the coca bush, from the intermediate zone between coastal plain and the *sierra*, for its seemingly miraculous power to dampen the effects of hunger, thirst and altitude sickness. This introduction to the concept of exchange value in Ecuador depicts both the *spondylus* shell and one of the many hoards of copper ax money which have been found intact. The latter is cited as a trade good, an early form of money, based upon its occurrence in quantities beyond all immediate use value in archaeological sites along the entire Pacific coast, from Peru northwards to Mexico. Thus, commodities not particularly susceptible to rapid deterioration form a middle stage in the development of money, in which the purely symbolic value gradually becomes paramount. In ancient Greece, Aristotle had already made this distinction between 'use value' and 'exchange value' among

naturally occurring and value-added commodities, citing this as the decisive step in the invention of money.

A full-page map of the Spanish viceroyalties in the Americas situates the geographical scope of the areas which, having become colonies after the Conquest, would soon produce the majority of the world's silver, and eventually its money. Hoyos is adamant in pointing out that the purpose of Spanish Conquest was to search for *El Dorado* and establish a base for the extraction of precious metals, the very essence of money until fairly recent times. No contradiction was felt to exist among the reasons officially given to justify the Conquest. As one *conquistador* put it: "We have set out to honor God by gaining new souls and converting the heathen, to honor the Emperor (Charles V) by expanding his kingdoms, and to get rich."

We can contrast this seeming disparity with the more religious attitude expressed by the Spanish Friar Bartolomé de las Casas, who early on pointed out that one can hardly gain souls for Christendom by pursuing policies resulting in the enslavement of indigenous peoples, which, in the Caribbean sphere he himself had helped to conquer, were rapidly leading to the extinction of the native population. Still, he did not question the premises for conquest, merely their erroneous application in terms of sustainability. And again, a further contrast can be made by comparing a more literary attitude, that of Don Quixote in the first modern novel, of 1605, which itself can be seen as a parable for the entire Spanish enterprise. Seemingly enlightened, the hero/madman of La Mancha likewise sought to increase the honor of king and self, albeit by aiding the helpless—especially women—caught up in a Golden Age which he claimed had become an "age of steel," having lost its soul through the abuses of modern arms. For his part, Don Quixote misused his antiquated medieval weaponry, although he remained opposed to the use of firearms, which he claimed could give an unfair advantage to the coward.

However, what he disavowed entirely was the importance of money, for fortune and honor, he mistakenly felt, would come spontaneously to one with such a noble goal. Thus returning to a pre-capitalistic, more medieval view in which pecuniary reward is secondary to that of feudal boons of largesse to be bestowed upon the knight by the ruler, his enterprise is doomed from the start. Having never worked a day in his life—a quality Don Quixote shared with the rest of Spanish nobility—he sells his land, squandering his medieval patrimony instead of working it, to pay for the romances of chivalry; the Knights of the Round Table were one of his inspirations. His campaign would include his Squire, Sancho Panza, a cowardly glutton possessing no such inner code of honor. Sancho gradually helps himself to his master's wealth, even inheriting him upon his inevitable death, from a broken heart and spirit. While most modern folk tend to equate Don Quixote with the heroic, if perhaps unrealistic tilter at windmills, in his failure to save the day lies the darker side of the Age of Conquest. Throughout the novel, the new code of honor, in the early modern times of the Baroque, is called 'industry,' the creative work of the spirit. The industrious Dutch, less suited to conquest by force of arms, but masters of trade, understood this instinctively. That the naïve Don Quixote could be the victim of trickery and even betrayal, will not come as a surprise to anyone with more than a passing knowledge of the history of Spanish conquest and colonization of the New World. Pirates flourished where viceroys feared to tread.



*The anachronistic Don Quixote rejected money, but the forward-thinking Quito Mint was continuously forced to reinvent and rebuild itself to produce money for the scant 30 years of its existence. Plaza de España Monument in Madrid.*

But I digress. Ever the realist himself, and yet a believer in the potential for human justice, even after such questionable beginnings as those of the Spanish conquest, author Hoyos maps out for the reader in beautifully illustrated fashion the vast array of colonial institutions. These include the centers of political might and mining wealth, and the subsequent establishment of mints, including easy-to-follow appendices to each chapter. Even terms such as ‘engraver’ and ‘assayer’ are defined at length. In fact, the greatest single strength of *Ecuadorian Coins* lies in its structure, its strictly chronological approach including color-coded maps, contemporary artwork, graphs and tables. Hoyos also comments on the merits and weaknesses of the various members of Spanish royalty, and indeed of the entire colonial (and post-colonial after Ecuador’s independence from Spain in 1822) political and economic hierarchy. Through a numismatic analysis in which every coin is pictured and analyzed, as well as relevant banknotes, the monetary system is outlined at length. Explaining how all of this came about, the author introduces the reader to the history of Ecuador, and by proxy to the entire Andean region.

Even a numismatist lacking Spanish reading skills can follow the historical, economic and numismatic thrust of this work, in attractive coffee-table format. Hoyos does, however, sacrifice anecdotal elaboration, while gaining rapid ease of perusal. Thus, in several instances where the role of women was fundamental in changing the course of historical events, this reader would have preferred a more profound analysis, for example of Simón Bolívar’s consort Manuela Saenz, and her role in the shaping of *La Gran Colombia*. This was the ‘Greater Colombia’ upon which Bolívar, the Liberator whose goal was to become the George Washington of a United States of South America, foundered both politically and personally. In such cases, due mention is made in the text, but only enough hints are given to whet the reader’s appetite for further inquiry. Luckily, source material is always cited, and bibliographies are complete. The logical use of visual aids throughout *La Moneda Ecuatoriana* practically requires one to concentrate on the coins themselves, and on where, when and how they came to exist.

We should note that this work was sponsored by the *Banco de Guayaquil*, and is a patriotically inspired, free-trade oriented, universally valid introductory text to a highly complex subject, always remaining optimistic in tone. Despite threats from

neighboring countries, inner turmoil and natural disasters such as earthquakes and even volcanoes, Ecuador has gradually produced a society for which the author makes no apologies. And this book constitutes much of the evidence, as if to say that in such grave times, the purest form of protest is beauty. The author minces no words on just who the villains have been in his country's history, and is even more forthright in extolling a number of its heroic figures. One of these—duly mentioned—was in fact a foreigner, the chief engraver William Jameson, the Scottish-born assayer whose initials are seen on most Ecuadorean coins of the middle third of the nineteenth century. “G.J.” stands for “Guillermo Jámeson” in its Hispanicized version, and there will be more to say about him soon.

Hoyos devotes Chapters 3 and 4 to reviewing the two most basic types of Spanish colonial coins, most of which were produced, at first, either in Mexico, Lima or Potosí. The earlier type, the well-known cob coinage, termed *macuquina* in Spanish, was simply hammered, in much the same fashion as had been occurring throughout the Old World since ancient times. For these coins, correct weight and fineness were of the essence, and thus both the mintmark and the responsible assayer had to be clearly visible, and often not much else. Aesthetics were definitely a secondary consideration, since in the mercantilist economy Spain was striving to maintain, precious metals were to flow in one direction, toward the mother country. The King received his ‘royal fifth’ off the top, of all precious metals produced. Uncoined bullion was also shipped directly on the fleets, and would be minted into coins upon arrival in Seville.

Coined gold and silver were shipped as well, to buy luxury goods for the purpose of ostentation considered mandatory among the Spanish nobles in charge of affairs in the New World. In fact, the colonies were supposed to buy all their manufactured goods from Spain or her allies. This is the essence of mercantilism. It took several centuries for Spain to realize they had sent Spanish colonists who would become, in the course of time, Mexicans, Peruvians or Ecuadoreans, to cite just a few of the over twenty countries into which the colonies were already developing. Mexico, for example, comprised most of what is now Mexico, and large areas of what are now the United States and Central America as well, while ‘Peru’ stood originally for most of Andean South America. These two regions were known as viceroyalties, to be ruled by Viceroys from Spanish nobility; gradually, more distinct regions formed, the *audiencias* which would go on to become nations. Some, such as New Granada, the present day Colombia (only larger), or Santiago in Chile, were to produce coinage. Quito never did, in colonial times.

The crude cob coinage spanned the period in which the Hapsburg Kings ruled Spain, throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Charles V and Philip II both enjoyed long reigns until nearly the close of the sixteenth century, Philip dying in 1598. Much of the wealth of precious metals shipped to Spain—if not lost in hurricanes or to British, French or Dutch pirates—went to pay for cathedrals and palaces in the mother country, and for the lifestyles of those who inhabited them. There was, however, almost enough left over to fight a long series of European wars. Charles fought the Protestants in Central Europe, the Turks in the southern and eastern Mediterranean, and the French wherever they threatened Spanish hegemony. Philip defeated the Turks decisively at the Battle of Lepanto off the shores of present-day Greece, in 1571, a battle in which a young Miguel de Cervantes participated heroically. Gravely wounded, Cervantes had no future in the military, instead using

his one remaining hand to write *Don Quixote*. Vowing he would rather see the Spanish Empire founder than rule over Protestants, Phillip sent the Duke of Alba into the Low Countries, accompanied by the Spanish Inquisition. The resulting Dutch rebellion would last some 80 years, consuming most of the vast wealth of the Indies, and only succeeded in creating the nation of Holland, the United Provinces north of Belgium. Holland, of course, valued international commerce above all else, while Spain, to its detriment and eventual demise, put its stock in bullion and war alone, along with the one-sided trade with its colonies. After the Portuguese succession crisis of 1580 Philip II ostensibly controlled most of the New World including Brazil, plus the Portuguese trading empire along the shores of Africa, India, and China all the way to the Spice Islands of Indonesia and finally the Philippines, named after the Spanish king. He even toyed with the idea of mounting an expeditionary force to conquer China. But Philip was already over-extended, and would never rule over Protestants, or conquer them again. Nearly his entire fleet, the “Invincible Armada” was destroyed in storms around the British Isles in 1588, as well as by the fierce resistance of every British sailor who could man a boat to harass the unwieldy Spanish galleons. Their offensive sea power became a thing of the past. Instead, during these very years Queen Elizabeth I would begin to colonize Virginia, named after the (supposedly) ‘Virgin Queen’, and we in North America now speak mostly English instead of Spanish north of the border of Spain’s former colonies.



**The hammered ‘pieces of eight’ were often produced in Potosí, but few of these coins found their way to Quito. Image courtesy of Heritage Rare Coins, HA.com.**

By the middle of the seventeenth century, Holland had been lost, and the oomph had gone out of the Spanish monarchy as well. Philip III relied on favored advisors to wield power, while his son Philip IV did the same while concentrating on his hobbies of hunting and maintaining a fleet of mistresses. The last Hapsburg king, Charles II, was so enfeebled by generations of inbreeding among the European royal families that he lacked all power to reason, speak coherently or father an heir; his mother did most of the ruling. Of Spain’s Golden Age, only the glitter remained, still seen today in the countless ornate cathedrals which adorn the mother country and her former colonies as well, built ultimately by the toil of forced indigenous labor.

All earthly glory is transitory: *Sic transit gloria mundi*, the ancient Romans used to say, as well they should have: “Thus pass the glories of this world.” The gold-covered Incan temples, their ‘teardrops of the sun’, would become magnificent altars throughout the New and the Old Worlds, from Taxco in Mexico to Lima in Peru, from the Jesuit Church of San Francisco in Quito to the Cathedral of Seville. This Latin phrase became the watchword of the Spanish Baroque as well. Melvin Hoyos

clearly feels the need to inform what would become the present—in Quito's all-too-brief place in the sun as the site of magnificent coinage—through recounting the past. And Quito's moment of glory would be fleeting indeed.

The eighteenth century would also come and go without Ecuador producing its own coinage or even possessing sufficient coinage to conduct trade on a reasonable scale. What would arrive, especially at the main coastal port city of Guayaquil, were repeated attacks by pirates, called *filabusteros* by the author. He describes how Ecuador's main shipping installations and defenses were put to the test, as Guayaquil was repeatedly sacked. However, Hoyos takes special pride from the fact that Quito itself, the capital city between two main ranges of the Andes, and well inland, was never in danger. Its forces were generally able to rout the attackers and retake Guayaquil as well. Due to the War of Spanish Succession in the first years of the new century, the French dynasty of the Bourbons came to power in Spain. These were by and large able kings who allowed the winds of the French Enlightenment, especially in the scientific realm, to blow more freely. Located as it is at the equator, numerous scientific expeditions such as that of Alexander von Humboldt passed through what is today Ecuador. Some of their accomplishments were in the fields of cartography and botany, involving the fixing of longitude—how far east or west—a problem which had hampered sailors from at least the time of Christopher Columbus. They included the formal discovery and publication of countless species of flora and fauna, especially in the region's eastern Amazonian basin and the Galapagos Islands, paving the way for Charles Darwin's famous expedition which would lead to the theory of evolution.

The author notes wryly that the effort of the Bourbon kings to open the Spanish colonial region to new modes of thought and increased educational opportunities, even to the point of expelling the Jesuit order which had hitherto controlled much of the educational system, had the unintended consequence of fomenting the desire for independence among the cultural elite throughout the New World. News of the American and French revolutions played a role as well, showing that it was indeed possible to topple the old order of monarchies and begin planning to throw off the colonial yoke.



**Produced by more advanced screw press technology, much 18<sup>th</sup> century coinage in Latin America, such as this 1732 eight reales of Mexico, depicted the pillars of Hercules framing the two hemispheres of the Old and New Worlds. Although one of the world's most famous trade coins, few were seen in commerce in Quito.**

**Image courtesy of Heritage Rare Coins, HA.com.**

On the coinage front, the Latin American mints were modernizing as well, throughout the eighteenth century, producing the famous pillar dollars and their fractionals, called *columnarios* in Spanish due to the Pillars of Hercules depicted upon them, framing the two hemispheres in which Spain had once reigned supreme. The more sophisticated screw press technology became widespread, known as coining by *volante* in Spanish, as the coinage press was turned by a ‘flying’ arm. The ends were often weighted by metal balls with leather straps attached, a bit like the *bolas* used by indigenous hunters and the Argentine gauchos of the pampas of the Southern Cone region to bring down prey or cattle, respectively. Human or animal power was still the means of propulsion, as the steam engine would not be used until the following century. Hoyos ascribes the overall lack of progress in the *Audiencia* of Quito to precisely the lack of sufficient circulating medium. This handsome ‘pillar’ coinage, difficult to counterfeit or file down, since it was perfectly round with corded edges, was produced at the mints of Mexico City, Guatemala City, Potosí, Lima and even in smaller quantities at both Santa Fe de Bogotá and in the far southern mint Santiago (Chile). There was no mint in Quito, although repeated requests for one were made by local authorities. In any event, these elegant types were supplanted by coinage bearing the bust of the Spanish kings, from the early 1770s onward, at a time when loyalty to the Spanish throne was at an all-time low throughout the colonies. The most distant mints would often not receive the likeness of newly crowned monarchs until many months, or even years following the death of the previous king, at times leading to fanciful busts of Spanish kings of whom only the name was known, on the coinage produced during transitional periods between reigns.

From the moment that news of the despotic Spanish Ferdinand VII’s capture by French forces sent by the Emperor Napoleon—his brother José Napoleon leading the occupation—finally reached the New World, the voices in favor of independence from Spain became ever more strident. Suddenly, an outward show of patriotism towards the home country took on a certain ambiguous tone. In the southern Andalusian port city of Cádiz, gateway to the New World, Spanish patriots would form a Constitutional Convention in 1812. Gradually a consensus would form that although the French Occupation must be resisted at all costs, it would hardly do for Spain to remain an absolute monarchy of the most backward type. And Ferdinand VII—“who learned little and forgot nothing”—was hardly one to agree to concessions increasing the participation of the bourgeois merchant class in governmental decision making. In the New World, a new class of independently minded patriotic thinkers came to realize that ‘We don’t need any of them,’ Bourbon colonial rulers or Napoleon either. The Spanish royalist garrisons had their own ideas, of course, and so the Wars of Independence from Spain would drag on from around 1810 until the last bastion of Spanish rule, Bolivia, finally fell in 1825. Ecuador itself had already gained independence following the Battle of Pichincha—the volcano overlooking Quito—in 1822.

While a grateful populace named ‘Bolivia’ after the chief military architect of Independence, Simón Bolívar, the three northernmost colonies would join briefly to form a ‘Greater Colombia’. This *Gran Colombia* was comprised of the three new countries of Colombia—which at the time included what is today Panama—Venezuela and Ecuador. Bolívar himself, as the hero of independence, would become the first, in fact the only real president of the combined Greater Colombia, which was to dissolve quickly following his death in 1830. Bolívar had dreamed of a United

States of South America along a federalist model, as had occurred at first in the newly liberated North American colonies. When centralization proved the only viable mode of governance, he was accused of becoming increasingly despotic. The man who wished to become the George Washington of South America would die cursing his fate, claiming, probably correctly, that trying to unite South America “was like attempting to plow the sea.”



**The Liberator Simón Bolívar and the sun over the ‘mountain of silver’ of Potosí on a gold eight scudo coin of his namesake country Bolivia. Image courtesy of Heritage Rare Coins, HA.com.**

One of Bolívar’s first decrees, immediately following the Battle of Pichincha, was to force the acceptance, at par, of the silver coins of the victorious Greater Colombia. Struck in massive quantities but only to a fineness of 0.666 silver, these now classic coins, the first type of which bears the motto *Libertad Americana* over the bust of an Indian in feathered headdress, were to cause many a tumult on the streets of Quito. How ironic that the Ecuadoreans, Colombians and Venezuelans could defeat the Spanish militarily, but not replace their sound money, of slightly over 0.900 fineness. Hoyos describes how the vanquished Spanish beat a hasty retreat, either taking their money as they fled, or hiding what they could not carry. For the following generation or so, there would seldom be a circulating medium of sufficient quality to carry on business or gain international respect as trading partners. The ‘bad money’ had effectively driven out the good, in a classic example of Gresham’s Law at work. And since the silver coinage of low fineness also looked ‘bad’—however quaint numismatists may find it today—bearing numerous laminations, flan flaws, and the like, it was child’s play to counterfeit.

Alarmed that the situation was getting out of hand, Bolívar decreed the establishment of a regional mint for the ‘Department of the South,’ as the temperate, inter-Andean valley of Quito, together with the torrid coastal and Amazonian regions, was termed. This decree dates from June of 1823, barely a year following victory in the War of Liberation. And the Liberator, as Bolívar was called, also appointed a local mint master to head up the Quito mint, supplying one Miguel Bello with the wherewithal to secure coinage implements. However, never was any silver delivered to be coined. Hoyos presumes, with many historians, that Bello went right ahead and produced counterfeits of the Greater Colombia coinage, containing little or no silver. It is known that a number of local jewelers did so as well, and that later, in 1831 when the first ‘real’ Ecuadorean mint was being established, Bello sold the minting implements to the new government of General Flores.

The end of the short-lived ‘Gran Colombia’ was coincident with the death of Bolívar in 1830. At this point, Juan José Flores, a young general from the Liberator’s army, became the first President of Ecuador, and one of his first orders of business was a Constitutional Convention formally founding the Mint of Quito, while deciding on a name for the new country. Hoyos terms the selection, Ecuador, as both fanciful and “strange.” After all, the region had been called “Quitu” under the rule of the Incan empire, and Quito after that, before becoming the Department of the South within Greater Colombia. By then, it was already known that the equator ran somewhere close to Quito, although the exact point had only recently been pinpointed with the arrival of teams of scientists in the late eighteenth century. Today, of course, it is but a short bus ride to the northern outskirts of town, to *La Mitad del Mundo* monument, the Middle of the World, where one can straddle the Equator, standing with one foot in the northern hemisphere and the other in the southern. I was amazed to see that water really does drain in the opposite direction slightly south of the Equator, which I first noticed as I emptied the bathtub in our hotel.

So ‘Ecuador’ it would be, although the first coins we can directly attribute to this nation were created by counter stamping the initials MdQ, *Moneda de Quito*, upon the ubiquitous and still somewhat reviled coinage of *Gran Colombia*; (image courtesy of Heritage Rare Coins, HA.com). I have personally only possessed one of these pieces, and was warned that counterfeits abound, of both the MdQ monogram and of the coins it was stamped onto.



When actual coinage finally did appear in 1833, it was not made from silver donated by the President’s wife, as the story goes with the first ‘half dismes’ of the Philadelphia mint, but rather because “General Flores...ordered the confiscation of all the metal which currently existed in the country,” mostly from churches, as Hoyos points out. He goes on to say that for centuries, silver minted in South America had primarily come from the legendary *Cerro de Potosí*, the mountain of silver in *Alto Perú*, or ‘Upper Peru’, well-named as the mines were located up to an elevation of 15,000 feet in Bolivia. This source had ceased to exist for all practical purposes, as no one in Ecuador possessed the means of purchasing it. Communication, travel and trade within South America became more difficult after liberation from Spain, not easier. While today it is but a short ride on the gondola, the *funicular*, from Quito to the high Andean tundra at 14,000 feet of elevation, beneath the double-coned volcano Pichincha, back in the day things were not so simple.

Many a European traveler expressed amazement that they were expected to allow themselves to be physically carried on the backs of indigenous porters, throughout the Andes, until the railroads came late in the nineteenth century. Local llamas, the only common beast of burden, were not up to the task, and the Quechua-speaking bearers might themselves weigh only half as much as the more corpulent Westerners they wore like rucksacks.

The first wholly Ecuadorean coins bear the legend *El Ecuador en Colombia*, which was changed to *República del Ecuador* in 1835. While the entire range of Spanish real-denominated coinage was authorized, silver pieces of one half real, one real, two reales and four reales are most commonly encountered from the period of 1833 to

1844, with the scarce gold escudo coinage most often represented by the four escudos. (In Melville's novel, an even rarer eight escudos gold coin was nailed to the mast as an incentive to capture *Moby Dick*.) All would bear the equatorial sun over the 'twin peaks' of the local volcano Pichincha, while the reverse depicted a cornucopia surrounding a fasces enclosing a bow and arrows, reminiscent of minor Colombian coinage of the 1830s. Again, ironically, the symbolism inherent here is that of prosperity shoring up the power of the unified state by controlling traditional weapons, while in fact nothing could have been further from the truth. But a start had been made. A state had been established, named, and was producing sovereign coinage at last.

Earlier on, mention was made in this review article of the coins often seen in the windows of jewelers' shops in Quito, and these counterfeits were, in fact, the coins most often encountered in the capital. They still are, and Hoyos pictures several of these, which brought home for me the reality both past and present. Genuine Ecuadorean coinage from the decades of the 1830s and 40s is seen occasionally, and is not always even expensive, except in Quito! Those few pieces I own personally were found, often years apart, at coin shows throughout the United States and Europe, and at somewhat affordable prices, despite obvious impairments. But truly choice pieces of any denomination are beyond the capacity of any but the most well-heeled collectors to purchase, and then generally in major auctions. This is especially true when compared to the coinage of nearby Andean countries such as Peru, Bolivia, or Colombia. I will leave most of the proof of this assertion (think holes and scratches!) to the reader's imagination, except to picture a few representative samples from my own collection, such as they are:



**These crude coins, an 1842 4 reales and an 1837 gold 4 escudos, typify the Quito Mint's production from 1833 through the early 1840s. Choice, unimpaired examples are difficult to find outside of major auctions. On most specimens, such as mine, both mint-caused and circulation defects abound. (Enlarged ×1.5)**

Many Ecuadorean presidents have served two separated terms, a precursor to the system long prevalent in Colombia in the twentieth century, by which the Liberals and Conservatives agreed to alternate power, in successive terms. In Ecuador, it was because the 'strongman remained a strongman' and simply would wait out the opposition until he could return to power. And this was hardly surprising given the tensions among the geographically separated regions of Ecuador. Most notable were

differences in prevailing economic realities, political power structures and lifestyles in the valley of Quito as opposed to the tropical coast. Guayaquil was more connected to port cities elsewhere in Latin America or even in Europe than to the capital. Quito is at high elevation and physically isolated from all which lay beyond the Andean valley walls, and thus suffered more from the total lack of circulating medium. With structural issues such as these as yet not addressed, the representative center of power was bound to shift at the end of a given president's term. This trend had already begun with the struggle between Bolívar and the Spanish. The Liberator, who had held power in Greater Colombia until ousted by the arrival of Ferdinand VII's Spanish army at the close of the Napoleonic wars, escaped as an exile to the Caribbean, from which he would however return triumphant.

So it was in the case of Juan José Flores; Hoyos speaks of the second government (1839-1843) of Flores as if this were the norm. And indeed, under 'Flores II,' the previous president, Rocafuerte (whose name means 'hard rock' in Spanish) was shipped off to govern Guayaquil, whereupon Flores attempted to fulfill his mandate of 'real coinage for a real country,' largely putting an end to the widespread counterfeiting in the capital. But Rocafuerte forcefully asserted that doing so on the coast as well would totally unbalance the new nation, since genuine coins were the exception in Guayaquil, while in Quito the opposite was the case. While not altogether true, the citizenry in coastal Guayaquil would indeed have been ruined. Rather than risk civil war, Flores was forced to quietly authorize the continued acceptance of counterfeits until 1842. All this accomplished was to afford him the dubious distinction of having the *cobrunas* (copper counterfeits with a thin silver wash) named after him, as *floreanas*. Hitherto their popular name had been *hechizas*, meaning 'bewitched,' or even 'voodoo money,' as we might call it today. Hoyos describes the "veritable mountains of fake coins" which accumulated throughout the land, as counterfeits were turned in to exchange for 'real money.'

The measure taken to discourage counterfeiting was at the same time wise politically and a disaster in real terms. As of 1843, an edge inscription was added, reading *MORAL - INDUSTRIA*, which means exactly what it looks like, and is not a bad motto for a centralist regime emphasizing moral values to espouse. The problem was not only that "these were not perfect either," as the author points out. It was that the country was caught up in a vicious cycle of economic abuse; the 'amnesty' afforded by the Flores government in allowing citizens to turn in counterfeits in exchange for good money simply afforded an extended window of opportunity for counterfeiters to produce more! And they could do so on a much larger scale, no longer having to worry about making pieces which approximated the real thing. Hoyos does not say whether the exceptional re-election of Flores to yet another, this time consecutive term in office was due to the extreme measure he had taken in 'making good on bad money.' He insists, however, that "the new coins including edge inscriptions were never successfully counterfeited."

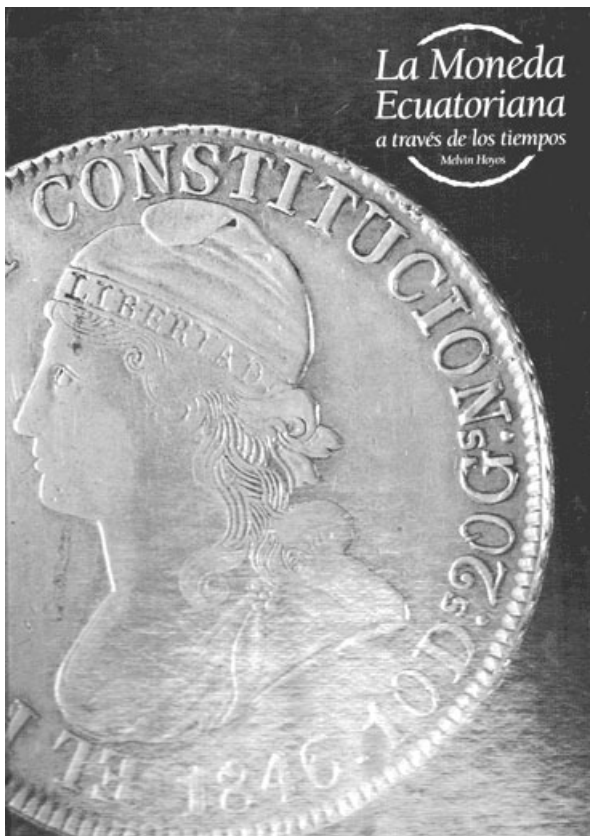
And as if to put the lie to any notion that Flores' consecutive re-election was due to his continued emphasis on morality and industry, the author goes on to state: "The third term of Flores was characterized by a series of unwise moves, corruption scandals and armed conflicts which brought the country to a level of convulsions which would escalate into the popular uprising which removed him from power." In any case, given the restive air amongst the populace, consecutive terms were unlikely to be successful.

The years from 1830 until 1845 have always been considered the most troubled in terms of Ecuador's economic consolidation as a sovereign nation. Summing up, we can say that counterfeit coinage outweighed the genuine, and that genuine coins were neither produced in sufficient quantity, of sufficient fineness nor exactness of fabrication to encourage acceptance or discourage counterfeiting. A sound monetary foundation was considered as a fundamental component of sovereignty, both at home and abroad. Entire coinages—especially when they surpassed the level of the typical mint product described above—were confiscated by outgoing government officials or rogue generals, such as Flores, in whom such high hopes had once been placed. 1845 saw his definitive ouster, and for most of the next twenty years, improvements in the morality of leadership and in popular morale were apparent. This second period is known as the 'Marcist revolution,' and used its own system of dating, with 1845 henceforth designated as 'the first year of liberty.' Although I have heard similar terms used on Radio Havana from as far away as the Florida Everglades, from the tone employed by the author, this was quite credible in Quito after 1845.



**David Fiero admires Ecuador's revamped coat of arms, which adorns the reverse of many an Ecuadorian coin, at the Templo de la Patria on the site of the Battle of Pichincha, where Ecuador won its independence from Spain in 1822.**

Monetarily, the immediate goal was to produce a *peso fuerte*, a dollar-sized coin of high fineness worthy of the public trust. A new flag and coat of arms were produced for Ecuador as well. The coin in fact appeared, in 1846, and exceeded expectations. Unfortunately, only 1,386 pieces were minted. And of these, few remain. Hoyos states emphatically that "to the detriment of the country, the coins disappeared rapidly, most beyond our national boundaries, for the same reason that distinguished them, that is due to their very excellence in terms of design, quality of striking and metallic content."



***The peso fuerte of 1846, one of Quito's earliest showpiece coins, adorns the cover and dust jacket of 'Ecuadorian Coinage'.***

plantation owners of the tropical coastal region. First of all, the Jesuits were typically landholders largely exempt from paying taxes. Their prowess at providing education at all levels of instruction had, however, guaranteed that children would receive first-class, albeit strict, classical schooling. And the institution of slavery was as much the 'meal-ticket' for privileged hacienda owners as it once was in the American South. We should note, however, that emancipation did not cause the immediate outbreak of a civil war, and that this happened in Ecuador more than a decade before it occurred in the United States or much of the rest of South America. So it cannot be denied that progress had been made, by any standards. Alas, Mint Directors fared worse than presidents throughout the first thirty years of Ecuador's existence. After being ousted upon the political changing of the guard, or through their failure due to a lack of resources, they rarely returned.

The next general to assume the Presidency was Urbina's friend and fellow officer Francisco Robles, who the author describes as much too prepared to compromise with his detractors and this at the worst possible moment. At the end of 1858, civil war finally did break out, Urbina was overthrown and the capital moved to Guayaquil on the coast. The author uses the quaint term "defenestrated" for 'deposed,' literally, 'thrown out the window.' Incidentally, my *Diccionario enciclopédico Grijalba*, which I still prefer to Wikipedia although I can barely lift it from my bookshelf, informs me that the term originated in Prague, where the governing officials were literally tossed out the window of the Palace, first in 1419, and again two hundred years later at the onset of the Thirty Years War. Although the term entered all the European languages including English, we would probably say 'thrown under the

We can gain some appreciation for the national importance attached to the Mint in Quito by noting that following his presidency, Vicente Roca became Mint Director, and the post included the duties generally attached to Treasurer and Chief Accountant as well. Perhaps having merely survived a term in the office of the Presidency without having been exiled or worse was already considered sufficient qualification. It was by no means an easier job, fraught with success. In any event, by the 1850s only generals would attempt to confront the perils attached to the presidency. Hoyos implies that even they somehow 'weren't tough enough' for some tastes. For example, General Urbina started off the decade by twice bowing to pressure from the Quito-based Congress, first by expelling the Jesuits from Ecuador, and then by emancipating the slaves. Both decisions infuriated the conservative

bus' today. All to no avail, however, since neighboring Peru saw this instability as an opportunity to invade with an army of 10,000 men, huge by the standards of the day. And in the midst of the tumult, Quito was nearly leveled by a devastating earthquake. The entire historical center, including the Mint, was reduced to rubble; no longer were there windows to defenestrate anyone from. As Hoyos states: "On this sad note, the first chapter of the Quito mint concluded." Indeed.

In the midst of these times of troubles, progress did continue with the efforts to modernize Ecuador's coinage. We have only to behold the magnificent *peso fuerte*, literally a 'heavy-weight' in the annals of the country's numismatic history. Denominated as 5 *francos* on the European model of the soon to be adopted Latin Monetary Union, its acceptance was made difficult by this very fact. It was a piece of 10 *reales* rather than 8. Colombia, so often the precursor in South American monetary history, had introduced this first real step towards decimalization near the end of the previous decade. In any case, the piece is a marvel to behold, though perhaps ahead of its time. Today it is nearly unavailable at any price.



**One of Ecuador's most famous coins, the 1858 5 *francos*, shows the assayer's initials "G.J." The Scottish born William Jameson (The "G" initial is for the Spanish form of William "Guillermo") was later to become Mint Master as well, shortly before the demise of the Quito Mint. Image courtesy of Heritage Rare Coins, HA.com.**

One Ecuadorean president nearly everyone approved of, Gabriel García Moreno, took office in 1861. Hoyos points out that the early years of the decade saw the establishment of the first successful private banks, notably in the center of international commerce, Guayaquil. Overall, García Moreno's term was characterized as one of recuperation and reunification, "by his strong hand and important transformations in the fields of education and science." Clearly, Ecuador was maturing as a nation despite all the hardships it had suffered. This would mean, again, new coinage types. Although still denominated in *reales*, and of only 0.666 fineness, their designer's name, that of the Frenchman Barre who would quite literally dominate coinage design in the coming decades in much of Europe and Latin America, appears under the bust on the piece of 2 *reales* of 1862. However, like their foreign origin, their destiny was to be found in Europe as well. For nearly the entire mintage of 35,580 pesos was usurped by the very bank which was supposed to be modernizing the nation, the *Banco de Luzárraga* based in Guayaquil, and disappeared without a trace. The author suspects they were shipped off to be melted in London.

Hoyos describes this act, devastating for the nation, under the heading: “The Mint closes its doors definitively.”

Henceforth, Ecuadorean coinage was to be produced in Lima, Philadelphia, Santiago de Chile, or the Heaton mint in Birmingham, England, among other places. Today, only minor coins of Ecuador are to be found in circulation, and no banknotes at all except for U.S. greenbacks. The minor coinage mirrors U.S. coinage exactly, although the language and images employed are those of the home country. This is to say that Ecuador is one of the few countries today possessing two currencies—in this case *ours* and *theirs*, to paraphrase the museum employee who refused to accept my Presidential dollars—which circulate side-by-side successfully. Although this had not yet occurred when Hoyos wrote *La Moneda Ecuatoriana*, it is a logical extension of the situation in the years following liberation which he describes. Then, coins of Greater Columbia predominated. Today, both brass and copper-coated steel ‘pennies’, much more attractive and durable than our zinc cents with their thin wash of bronze, circulate alongside ours. None are scorned, or even left on the ground unwanted, as prices remain moderate and inflation, especially virulent from the 1960s until the 1990s, has been successfully curbed.

In Quito today, an *almuerzo*, that is to say a working-class, three course lunch, can be had for well under three dollars. There are also Ecuadorean ‘nickels’, ‘dimes’, ‘quarters’ and ‘halves’—these latter circulate successfully in Ecuador, just like our ‘golden dollars’ as long as they are Sacagaweas—which mirror our own. All circulate together, as they are all the same size, although the Ecuadorean pieces are made of durable stainless steel, perhaps the very ‘*acmonital*’ alloy which proved so durable in Italy in pre-Euro times. I confess to having recently thrown an Ecuadorean half dollar into the change machine at our local credit union, as an experiment. It was duly rejected, as these are magnetic. A counter example are the half dollars of Panama, which I have repeatedly found in bank-wrapped rolls of U.S. coins from the Federal Reserve! These are not rejected. ‘If they’re good enough for the Fed’...but that will have to remain another story, or even the impulse for another journey.

This review article only covers the origins, fitful beginnings and subsequent demise of the Quito mint. Just as with the origins of money itself, and money as conceived and executed by Spain and its New World colonies, I have attempted to summarize the text of *La Moneda Ecuatoriana* for the benefit of non-Spanish-reading *N.I.Bulletin* readers. The countless visual aids with which this magnificent work is imbued will reward any who attempt to peruse it, filling in the blanks, so to speak. I have included a few of my own experiences because enjoying fine books and traveling to numismatically interesting locales are among the highlights of my existence. Author Melvin Hoyos does an equally fine job in continuing to relate the drama that has been ‘Money in Ecuador’ until the turn of the millennium. Wikipedia informs us that the dual coinage system began in 2000, and that Ecuadorean fractional coins are produced at the Royal Canadian Mint of Canada and by the mint in Mexico. As Hoyos states, the Quito mint closed “definitively, in the last days of 1863 or the first days of 1864,” and we can already surmise from the author’s wording that nothing is absolutely ‘definitive’ regarding the early days of the Quito mint, a span of just over 30 years. Many have been the national mints of other countries which have helped Ecuador provide a none-too-steady stream of circulating medium, both before and following 1863-64. So there is nothing new about Canada and Mexico providing much of their coinage, even if the money, or unit of currency

as strictly defined, is based on that of the country which lies between them, the United States.

Currency unions of one sort or another, at first based loosely on metrological constants among the city states which comprised ancient Greece, and their colonies in the Mediterranean, have been with us as long as nations have been using money. And yet, things are never quite the same. You never know these sorts of things, or even suspect them, until you try. In Ecuador, people did not look askance at me for spending clad Kennedy half dollars, but they might in a gas station along the Illinois Tollway, let alone at a toll booth! Money may be a constant, but at the same time it remains relative, in a constant state of flux. And this is occurring with increasing rapidity. I can easily imagine someday visiting countries in which I would be considered insolvent without a cell phone or other hand-held device or even an imbedded chip in my body on which my virtual money would be stored. But I don't imagine that tiny Ecuador will be one of those countries anytime soon. Since I don't employ hand-held devices personally, this thought is pleasing to me.

It would be impossible to do justice to the first 30 years of the Quito mint without mentioning the role played by a certain William Jameson, alluded to earlier. His assayer's initials, 'G.J.', for the Hispanicized version of his name, 'Guillermo Jámeson', can be seen on early Ecuadorean coins from 1833 until 1862. This was a Scotsman, a botanist, engineer, medical doctor, assayer, a rather prolific author in many of these fields, and in the final year of the Quito mint, Mint Director. He had been caught up in the tumultuous times which marked the War of Independence from Spain, and after losing all the cargo on his ship under somewhat mysterious circumstances involving 'the fog of war,' simply stayed on in Ecuador for some forty years. After the mint closed, he went home to Scotland in an attempt to say goodbye to his friends and family, many of whom had died, and then returned to Quito to spend his final year, 1873. Alas, a number of his friends and those family members who had stayed in Quito had died as well. I mention him for several reasons; firstly, he is emblematic of the problems facing the Quito mint, as well as of the solutions sought and occasionally encountered. Jameson spent the second half of his life trying unsuccessfully to get paid for the work he had done planning, building, rebuilding on several occasions, and making the Quito mint function to the extent that it did. The second book I would like to mention, albeit briefly, *A Numismatic History of Ecuador*, is in large part the story of Jameson's trials and tribulations.

This fine volume, written by Michael Anderson, is in many ways the perfect companion piece to *La Moneda Ecuatoriana*. First of all, it is written in English, and instead of following Melvin Hoyos' more visual, global approach, as an illustrated history of money throughout the Hispanic world and in Ecuador as well, Anderson approaches the task in fine focus, almost microscopic at times. The former British Vice-Consul in Quito, Ecuador, from 1965 to 1968, Anderson relates the complete story of the life and letters of William Jameson as they affected the history of the Quito mint. He translates numerous passages from the 'liberal' press, notably *El Quiteño Libre*, on coinage and economic matters from these years. Anderson also transcribes many of the letters written by Jameson, who attempted to communicate his life work to everyone he knew or might take notice. As stoic in his own way as was the fictional Don Quixote—perhaps the embodiment of stoicism, in the sense of that ancient Roman philosopher from Spain, Seneca—Jameson tells the frank truth without ever feeling sorry for himself. This in itself is refreshing in the extreme.

However, nearing the end, even Jameson would lament: “This is a bad country to live in, and a worse one to die in.” Yet one feels that this was a man who had found his calling, and gave more to his adopted homeland—despite suffering from both poverty and treachery—than most of us would consider sacrificing even in the most comfortable of circumstances. He was never a ‘carpetbagger’ or opportunist in any shape or form smacking of imperialism, and in fact accomplished much while living most of his life in the direst of straights. I describe Jameson’s rather quixotic ‘quest’ in the review article: “Eyes Wide Open, Ears Wide Shut: Ecuador’s Struggle in the Nineteenth Century. Responsible ‘Minthood’ or Quixotic ‘Enchantment’?” The article appeared in the year 2000 in the *N.I. Bulletin*, and also serves as the basis for my introduction to Michael Anderson’s book.

Any numismatic researcher that owns either a copy of *La Moneda Ecuatoriana a través de los tiempos* by Melvin Hoyos or Anderson’s *A Numismatic History of Ecuador* should buy the other as they are definitely complementary and will add to a more complete understanding of the subject. Both are scarce but are often available from Dale Seppa, 103 N 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Virginia, MN 55792. Typically the Hoyos work costs a hundred dollars or more and the Anderson in the neighborhood of fifty dollars.



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### Quiz Answers (from page 172)

1.) San Marino 2.) Rwanda 3.) Sierra Leone 4.) Romania 5.) Seychelles 6.) Rhodesia and Nyasaland 7.) Switzerland 8.) Singapore 9.) Russia 10.) Serbia

### Picture Quiz Answer (from page 173)

Sri Lanka: Republic Silver 1000 Rupees 1998